

**REMARKS**

This Amendment responds to the Final Office action dated August 24, 2004.

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's comments regarding the allowability of claims 1, 2, 4-7, 9-14, 22, 23, and 25, and the indication that claims 17, 18, and 21 would be allowable if rewritten to include the subject matter recited in any associated base claim and any intervening claims. Upon entry of this paper, claims 3, 8, 15-21, and 24 have been canceled, and claims 26 and 27 have been added, leaving claims 1, 2, 4-7, 9-14, 22, 23, and 25-27 pending in the present application.

Consistent with the Examiner's comments, Applicant hereby cancels all rejected claims and has presented new claims that indicated as being allowable in the Final Office action. Specifically, claims 3, 8, 15-21, and 24 have been cancelled solely to expedite the prosecution of the present application, and should not be construed as acquiescence to any of the rejections stated. Furthermore, Applicant reserves the option to prosecute the same or similar claims in the instant or a subsequent patent application.

In addition, new claims 26 and 27 are presented which correspond to previously pending claims 17 and 21, respectively, rewritten to include any base and intervening claims. More specifically, independent claim 26 has been added to include the subject matter of original claim 15 and dependent claims 16 and 17, respectively. Similarly, independent claim 27 has been added to include the subject matter of original claim 15 and dependent claims 19, 20, and 21. Accordingly, no new matter is presented in claims 26 and 27.

Each of claims 1, 2, 4-7, 9-14, 22, 23, and 25-27 presently pending in the application has been indicated as allowable. Reconsideration and allowance of the application are respectfully requested. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of the subject application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney.

Dated: October 25, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brent E. Matthias", is written over a horizontal line.

Brent E. Matthias

Registration No.: 41,974

Attorney for Applicant

Marshall, Gerstein & Borun LLP  
6300 Sears Tower  
233 South Wacker Drive  
Chicago, IL 60606-6357  
Phone: (312) 474-6300  
Fax: (312) 474-044